

Song Analysis and Singing in Character

How do singers connect to the song beyond the notes?

Ask questions!

Analyze what you're singing. Ask and answer questions about the character and the song. The more you know, the more you can draw from, the more depth you can create. A held note becomes an emotional connection if you can relate it directly back to the character. Start with these questions:

Where is the character physically?

And this doesn't necessarily mean are they in the hall or the kitchen. This could mean:

- Where are they in their life?
- Where are they in relation to the other characters?
- Where are they right before they open their mouths to sing this song?

Where is the character emotionally?

Musicals happen because they take characters to a point where they can't do anything else but sing. So what is the emotional 'why' for the character that they have to break out into song?

Also ask yourself this: Does the character change their physical and emotional state by the end of the song?

What does the character want?

Is your character they trying to make a decision? Do they want to share their feelings about another character? Do they want happiness? A new life? Their old life back? This goes hand in hand with knowing the physical and emotional state of the character. Knowing what the character wants and communicating that in the song is the easiest way to connect to an audience.

What's going on in the song?

What is the story of the song? Make sure you understand what's being said. What's happening in the story up to this point. Sometimes musical numbers rely on metaphor and it's easy to catch someone who is only spouting words without any thought behind them. Can you write a one line description of the song?

Who is the character singing to?

Is it a specific person? Is it to the audience? If it's the audience that's fine, but think about what the character is trying to communicate to the audience, or get the audience to do. Be specific, and 'no one' is not an answer.

Song Analysis Sheet

Analyze the lyrics from a musical theatre song. How would you answer the questions?

1. Where is the character physically?
2. Where is the character emotionally?
3. Does the character change their physical or emotional state?
4. What does the character want?
5. What's going on in the song?
6. Who is the character singing to?